Decline in fish production

*358. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a great fall in fish production especially wild stock from sea and rivers;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the corrective measures being undertaken to stimulate the fish production?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) Though the overall fish production from the country has been on the increase, marine fish production has been more or less steady at 28-29 lakh tonnes during 2000-2004 and has shown a slight fall to 27.8 lakh tonnes during 2004-05. There has been some fluctuation in riverine capture fisheries in the recent years.

(b) The decline in marine fish production during 2004-05 is mainly attributed to the major havoc caused by tsunami during December, 2004. Topographic changes due to construction of dams, bridges and barrages and increased land based pollution besides intensive fishing are the major reasons for decline in riverine capture fisheries.

(c) In the marine sector resource conservation through closed seasons, mesh regulations and such other management measures are being implemented for replenishing the fish stock. Apart from this, production from the deep sea is being augmented by encouraging investment in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Measures to decongest the coastal waters by encouraging fishing beyond territorial waters by enabling the existing class of mechanised boats and encouraging introduction of the intermediate craft are being implemented. River ranching, abating pollution and fishing regulations are being practiced to enhance the health of riverine fish stock. Thrust is being given to increase fish production through aquaculture besides assisting the sector through various Central and Centrally Sponsored Schemes to improve fish production.